584 When the presents have been accepted, the ndonga plants the
585 arrow in the ground in front of the wife's parents. Hence the expression -sumya ikulí or -lubya likulí, "to plant the arrow," which remains very much the fashion even though nowadays the ndonga deposits rings in its place.

2. Consent

584 Asked by her parents or the ndonga, or on her own initiative, -- depending on her own inclinations, -- the girl pulls up the arrow or picks up the rings and gives them to her father. That is how she expresses her consent to the proposed engagement.

Her promptness, her nonchalance, or even the recalcitrant manner in which she performs this gesture show her [113] feelings. Usually her movements are lively. As we have explained, the union will have been anticipated for some time, and a Nkundó girl glories
584 in being the object of a man's love and in having a husband. Never-
●156 theless there are cases where the girl has to be persuaded to make the decision, especially if she is still young. Within herself she is not enthusiastic about the marriage. But in the end she bows to her father's wish, preferring a union which is contrary to her desires to fairly serious trouble with her family.

Naturally we find the whole range of variations which depend on individual temperament and on circumstances. A categorical refusal must certainly be very rare. It would be the act of a very strong-willed woman. But the union would have been called off much earlier, so that such an extreme situation would not be allowed to occur.

The case of a woman who submits to the ceremonies with resistance and against her wishes is more frequent. Not only does she have to be urged and persuaded, but her frowning face expresses her discontent. She picks up the objects with an apathetic gesture, turns
584 her back to her father, and drops the valuables behind her without even looking at him. None of the people present misunderstand the meaning of such gestures. Consequently members of the family and the notables who are present never fail to attract the father's attention to

584 the gravity of this situation. They try to make him change his mind and to dissuade him from accepting the bride price. To that end they try to make him see the consequences of his obstinacy: at the first favorable opportunity the woman will take flight, leading to palavers (and in the past often war), imprisonment, all sorts of [578] troubles, and finally the bride price will have to be returned for the divorce. Sometimes they succeed; other times all their wisdom and eloquence are in vain. Cupidity, the need to obtain the means of a ●[156] [114] bride price for a wife (for oneself, a son, a brother, etc.) and the profit he reaps from the union silence all other feelings. Here again, everything depends on the character of the individual. Nowadays the greater freedom resulting from colonization has reduced the frequency of such cases. Nevertheless, because of the reasons given, they still occur. But more frequently the ceremony takes place in a normal fashion. As long as it has not taken place, no further bride-price payments are made. This fact is sufficient to show the importance of the ceremony in Nkundó law, and thus the importance of the woman's public and official consent to the marriage proposed, though this consent is not expressed in words but only implied in a special, meaningful act. Cases which seem in contradiction to this statement are clearly breaches of that law.

In normal cases the father accepts the arrow or the rings from his daughter's hands and thus establishes his consent to the engagement and consequently to the marriage.

In other forms of marriage, which we will discuss later on (Chapters III and IV), consent is expressed in an entirely different fashion.

3. Abduction

583[x] Even before the coming of the Europeans there were instances where lovers persisted in their desire to marry in spite of the opposition of the woman's parents. When the parents refused to accept the ijulí, the engaged pair arranged an opportunity to flee. The woman tried to win her brother over to her cause, and out of brotherly love he usually